

25 February 1951

MEMORANDUM FOR: Director of Central Intelligence
FROM: Deputy Director (Plans)
SUBJECT: Article in New York Times Magazine
by Arthur Koestler

25X1



2. The idea has some merit but runs into the obvious difficulty that many people in Europe are afraid to enroll publicly in a Legion of Liberty on the theory that this would be an "execution roster" if the Communists should come in. Many people who will vote against the Communists in a secret ballot are unwilling to add their names to a list which the Communists might use.



ALLEN W. DULLES

25X

SECRET

The New York Times Magazine

Toward European unity—Officers from France, Holland, Italy, Greece, Norway and Belgium receive instructions from an American officer on the operation of a U. S. tank.

For a European 'Legion of Liberty'

Out of a united army, Mr. Koestler says, a United States of Europe could emerge.

By ARTHUR KOESTLER

WESTERN Europe is a patient in an iron lung. American economic and military aid provide it with oxygen, but it cannot live and breathe by itself. The sickness which paralyzes it is not of an economic nature. Nor is it social strife; nor the Communist phantom creed. These are symptoms of the disease, but not its cause. The cause is both deeper and simpler: Europe has lost faith in itself.

In all serious discussions with Frenchmen, Italians, or Western Germans, there arrives a moment of truth when this fact is admitted. The manner of admission may be cynical, or bitter, or resigned. The explanations and excuses vary according to case. Some say that Europe is bled out by its wars; others, that its will to survive has been sapped by the Communist cancer; still others put the blame on the capitalist system, the decline of Christian faith, on British insularism, or "the agents of Wall Street." Only on one point do all views agree: that in its present condition, Europe cannot survive.

In the larger part of Europe the

ARTHUR KOESTLER, noted novelist and former foreign correspondent, is perhaps best known as the author of "Darkness at Noon."

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civilization that made its greatness has already been destroyed, and human life degraded to the routine of the penitentiary. The remaining, truncated part is likewise doomed—unless there is a radical change in its political and moral climate. This change, this spiritual revival, is the only export which America cannot provide. It must come out of Europe itself. In what form? And what policy must America pursue, apart from continuing material assistance, to create the favorable conditions for a European resurrection?

II

BEFORE we can hope to find the bright answer to this question, certain wrong answers must be eliminated. These fall mainly into two types of popular fallacies. The first is generally voiced by well-meaning progressives on both sides of the Atlantic. It holds, roughly, that the best and only means of resisting Communist expansion, both military and ideological, is through social progress. Give land to

the landless Italian peasants, higher wages to the French workers, abolish poverty, create prosperity and social justice—and Europe will automatically recover its will to live.

It is a beautiful dream, yet a dream, for it confuses the desirable with the possible. The fight for social reform and economic progress is vitally necessary for the peoples of Europe. But it is not sufficient to insure their survival against Russian aggression, and it is not sufficient to bring forth, in the measurable future, that moral resurgence which alone can save them.

For one thing, the fight for social and economic justice has been going on for some two or three thousand years, and it is unlikely that the golden age will arrive just in time to stop the next Russian move against Berlin or Yugoslavia. Secondly, as long as Communist-controlled trade unions in France and Italy deliberately sabotage the economic recovery of their own countries, any quick, spectacular improvement in the living standards of the people is ruled out.

Finally, social progress may enter into a misshapen alliance with national egotism. The British people, under Labor rule, made substantial gains in social security, old-age pensions, national health services and so on; but these gains have been nullified on the European balance sheet by the Labor party's refusal "to accept any supranational authority dominated by non-Socialist governments."

LET us repeat, then: the struggle for social progress is necessary, but not sufficient to save Europe; just as vitamin tablets are healthful, but not sufficient to save a patient from a mortal disease.

The second wrong answer is related to the first. It says: "The Communist creed has the immense emotional appeal of a secular religion, whereas democracy, freedom of the individual, etc., have become stale clichés. If we want to counter the Communist threat, we must invent some revolutionary ideology or creed of a dynamic power equal to theirs."

Here we are again faced with the confusion between the desirable and the possible. Of course, if we had a flowing banner over us, like early Christianity or the tricolor in 1789, all our troubles would be over. But a faith, whether (Continued on Page 32)

British Overseas Airways Corp.—170x2½—All Roto

TOWARD MILITARY INTEGRATION—In the combined fall maneuvers of U. S., British and French occupation troops in Germany, a G.I. demonstrated the American bazooka.

For a European Legion of Liberty

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religious or secular, cannot be synthesized in a laboratory. Socialism, in one form or another, seemed the most promising secular religion until its atmosphere became corrupted and its forces sapped by Stalinism. In France and Italy the worshippers of tyranny and terror usurp the rightful place of a truly progressive party, and cunningly divert the energies of the progressive-minded into "anti-fascist" crusades against Coca-Cola and General Franco—as if the great threat to Europe came from Spain, not Russia, and the world had stood still since 1938.

As long as this encroachment lasts, there is no room on the French and Italian Left for the growth of a healthy progressive movement, and no chance for the development of a new, dynamic creed. The same is true, for different reasons, of British Labour's socialism in one country policy. To set one's hopes on a European revival from these quarters means to indulge in wishful thinking of a most honorable, but unrealistic kind.

III

WE conclude that the Communist expansion in Europe cannot be halted either by economic progress—however desirable in itself—nor by the invention of some miraculous patent ideology. Our time has no economic or spiritual panacea to offer to the disheartened masses in Europe. How, then, can we expect them to recover faith in themselves?

There is only one way, the obvious way: to replace their shattered national consciousness and tottering loyalties to their rulers by a European consciousness and a European loyalty.

According to a recent poll conducted in twelve Western European countries, 64 per cent of the people questioned were in favor of a Union of European nations, 38 per cent were undecided, and only 8 per cent against. In isolationist Britain, 51 per cent were in favor of Union and only 9 per cent against. Thus the answer to our question is given by the people of Europe themselves. They know by instinct that unification means infinitely more than a pooling of coal and steel, or the arithmetical addition of military forces.

They know and feel that, almost regardless of immediate material benefits, the unification of Europe would provide precisely that emotional appeal and dynamic uplift, that return of self-confidence and resurrection of the European spirit, which is required to counter and defeat the Communist phantom creed.

IN 1940, after the fall of Paris, Winston Churchill proposed the unification of the French and British Empires by a simple stroke of the pen. When the danger was past the lesson was forgotten. In 1948, after Stalin's seizure of Czechoslovakia, Ernest Bevin declared that Europe must unite or perish. Since then he and his colleagues have acted as if they had chosen the second alternative. Political federation, we were told, is premature; it must be preceded by economic integration. But when the Schuman plan for economic integration was presented it was declared unacceptable because it would entail a sacrifice in political sovereignty. And so it goes on.

Where can we break this vicious circle? Again the answer seems fairly obvious. The only political reality which has emerged after years of sterile haggling and prostration, is the Atlantic Pact. To the people of Europe this is still an abstract reality. A military alliance in itself is not a factor likely to ignite public imagination, but it could be made into such a factor.

A united European army could be the heaven which ultimately gives rise to a united Europe. It could be the means to by-pass the difficulties, real or imaginary, which at present block the road to political and economic integration. But on one condition only: that the problem of the European army should be approached not from a purely military, but from a psychological angle.

An army can reflect itself in the public mind as an abhorrent war machine, or as a symbol which arouses the political libido and evokes fervent emotions. The armies of the French and American Revolutions and the International Brigades in Spain were such

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symbol which arouses the political libido and evokes fervent emotions. The armies of the French and American Revolutions and the International Brotherhood of Man were such symbols. Is it very paradoxical to suggest that a European army of this type would be the most direct and logical means to restore Europe's faith in itself; to make it reconquer its pride and dignity; and to fill its people with a new, European consciousness?

IV

IN the first world war it took four years until the Western Allies achieved unified command. In the second World War it again took more than four years. Last month, though the third world war has not yet started and may never start, the North Atlantic foreign ministers accepted Dean Acheson's proposal of a single military command, with authority to organize an "effective integrated force" of the twelve Western nations. This is an important step which seems to prove that, under the impact of the common danger, integration in the military field may be less difficult to achieve than in the economic and political field.

Naturally, there is still a very long way from a paper resolution to practical reality. But here again a possible short cut offers itself. It does not represent a solution to the problem of how to create an army out of units with different national allegiances, nor to the problem of French anxieties regarding German rearmament—to mention only two of the obvious difficulties. What is proposed here is merely an experiment; but an experiment relatively easy to carry out which does not run counter to any vested national interests, and which, if successful, may produce far-reaching and unexpected results.

THE proposal aims at the creation of an elite force, within the framework of the Atlantic Pact and under the direct authority of its supreme command, called the Legion of Liberty. The Legion of Liberty (abbrev. "LL") is to consist of individual volunteers from the eleven West European nations, and is to be so composed that the various nationalities are mixed together on the lowest level—i.e. that each platoon shall comprise soldiers from several, and if possible all, nationalities. In other words, instead of being "integrated from above" by the coordination of units from different national armies, the LL would be a force "integrated at the base." It would represent Pan Europe in a nutshell.

The value of such a force would be both practical and

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symbolic. Let us take the practical aspect first.

(a) The conventional units of the national armies which are to be "allocated" to the European command will have to be handled with due regard to the susceptibilities of the various powers concerned; friction, jealousies and resentment are unavoidable in such cases. The LL units, on the other hand, would be at the immediate and direct disposal of the supreme command, and all diplomatic considerations, with their deleterious effects on strategy, would be short-circuited.

(b) The examples of the French Foreign Legion, the Spanish Tercio, and the International Brigades tend to show that the fighting morale of such mixed units is excellent and often superior to that of normal units. The reason for this may be that the heterogeneous nature of such forces leaves less scope than in homogeneous units for the development of collective grudges and adverse political currents.

(c) The language of command in the LL would be French. The language barrier presents no difficulties, as experience shows that the limited technical vocabulary of the army is picked up by the alien recruit almost as quickly as if he had to learn the terms in his own language. This the present writer can confirm from personal experiences as a soldier in the French Foreign Legion and the British Aliens' Pioneer Corps.

(d) Whereas the bulk of the European army, out of the "allocated" national contingents will require difficult negotiations and considerable time, the recruitment of one or several LL regiments could start immediately. The only condition required is that the various governments concerned should consider service in the Legion of Liberty as equivalent to military service at home. It is hard to see what valid objection could be raised to such an arrangement.

(e) The creation of the LL force would not interfere with existing official projects, such as the Acheson plan, nor with unofficial suggestions such as Churchill's Strasbourg proposal of a European Ministry of Defense, or the Culbertson proposal of a United Nations Police Force, or the proposal of Senator Lodge for a Brigade composed of refugees from Eastern Europe.

(f) The LL force would be modeled on the pattern of the U. S. A. "Regimental Combat Team." That is to say, the LL regiment, or regiments (depending on the number of volunteers) should be to a large extent self-supporting, with their own infantry, tank

and engineer battalions, field artillery, and a small air arm.

(g) The Legion would have American equipment and European manpower. Its non-commissioned officers and subalterns would be selected according to ability; its officers from the rank of captain upward should be citizens of small nations. It would be stationed anywhere in Europe—e.g. in Western Germany, or in the Franco-German border provinces.

V

THE psychological aspect of the project, which is its very essence and *raison d'être*, does not need to be discussed at length. The very name, "Legion of Liberty," expresses its symbolic value and emotional significance.

At its least, the LL would remain a small élite corps of a few thousand men—say 4,000 to 5,000, the strength of a single regiment. It is hard to imagine that this number of volunteers would not be forthcoming. Even on this limited scale its symbolic value would be considerable. The young men of various nationalities would, through mutual contact, gain an inestimable experience and enlarged horizon—much more effectively than through all sorts of summer schools, student exchange projects and holidays abroad. They would acquire a European consciousness and spread it in their home countries after their return.

At its most, the Legion of Liberty would become the catalyzing agent for a truly integrated European army, and thus the pioneer of a United Europe. Every squad, platoon and company would act as an incubator of the new European spirit. The condition of being a soldier would lose its odious associations with wars of national jealousy and imperialist conquest. The Legion of Liberty would discard the worn-out flags which have long ceased to represent the realities of our shrinking planet. The French *poilu* and the German *Soldat* would no longer regard themselves as the helpless victims of archaic chauvinism, or the sinister machinations of bankers and politicians. They would be soldiers of Europe, marching under the flag of Europe, to the beat of a European anthem.

"WHY," wrote the President of the European Assembly, Henry Spaak, a few days ago, "why should the responsible statesmen who signed the Brussels Pact and the North Atlantic Treaty be incapable of drawing the logical conclusions from their texts? The defense of Europe means, to be sure, a good army; but it also means, and perhaps above all, the consciousness that Europe exists and that it deserves to exist."

THE NEW YORK TIMES

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DIRECTOR OF CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE

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Secretary

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Direct reply
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